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THE FAITH OF A WORKER

L. P. JACKS, D.D., LL.D., D.Litt.

By L. P. JACKS, D.D., LL.D., D.LITT.,

THE FAITH OF A WORKER
THE CHALLENGE OF LIFE
THE LOST RADIANCE OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION
A LIVING UNIVERSE
REALITIES AND SHAMS
RELIGIOUS PERPLEXITIES
THE LEGENDS OF SMOKEOVER

THE FAITH OF A WORKER

BY

L. P. JACKS, D.D., LL.D., D.LITT.
PRINCIPAL OF MANCHESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD



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THE FAITH OF A WORKER
— B —
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We are assured

Much may be conquered, much may be endured,
Of what degrades and crushes us. We know
That we have power over ourselves to do
And suffer—what, we know not till we try;
But something nobler than to live and die—
So taught those kings of old philosophy
Who reigned, before religion made men blind;
And those who suffer with their suffering kind
Yet feel their faith, religion.

SHELLEY, *Julian and Maddalo,*

FOREWORD

THIS little book, *The Faith of a Worker*, is the sequel to another little book called *The Challenge of Life*. The only claim the writer can advance to the title of worker, which he here assumes, is that he is in the habit of working hard; which habit he was compelled to acquire quite early in life by a stern but beneficent mother named Necessity, and has never since been able to give up. He well knows, however, that "working hard" will not be accepted by everybody as proof that he is a "worker," while some of our more advanced spirits may even regard it as the sign of a blackleg. At all events the "faith" that he here tries to expound has come straight out of his "work," and that, he thinks, is the source from which every man's faith must come, if it is to mean anything at all; all he has to say summing itself up into this practical formula: that a man should work as hard as the nature of his task requires, and harder if he can. Leisure

he regards as a higher kind of work, as work raised to the highest level of productiveness, or, briefly, as time converted, by labour, into eternity, and in that sense the proper object for a Labour Party to aim at. In spite of labour-saving devices, or rather in consequence of them, he observes a steady increase in the *quantity* of labour needed to carry on the world from day to day, and the task of civilization, as he conceives it, is to raise the *quality* of this labour until it all becomes leisure as just defined. A task more formidable could not be imagined, but the writer hopes that, as time goes on, churchmen, statesmen and schoolmasters will come to read their several functions in this light, and he sees signs that they are beginning to do so even now, the schoolmasters taking the lead.

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I: The Worker Is Challenged by Death

I: The Worker Is Challenged by Death

I

IN a certain factory where food products are prepared and exported to all parts of the world there may be an instance of that monotonous labour which is so marked and terrible a feature of mass production under modern industrial methods. It consists in knocking the top off an egg. The eggs are delivered by machinery on to a table behind which stands a row of women knocking off the tops. One woman has done it for thirty years.

This is an image of human life at the extreme stage of futility. It gives the beholder thoughts that are far from consoling. He may remember, for example, that food products from that factory are sometimes to be found on his own table, making him an accomplice to the monotony of that woman's life, a party to

its futility, and to that extent responsible for it.

Dickens has drawn a similar picture on another plane. Mr. Podsnap is the caricature of a purse-proud and pompous Englishman—perhaps Dickens's finest caricature, enormously exaggerated, of course, but yet true in the groundwork of it. He has an office in the city and a fine house in the West End of London; and his whole life resolves itself into a simple movement, like that of a pendulum, endlessly repeated, between his house and his office. Here is the ultimate formula of Podsnap's existence as Dickens presents it: "Rise at eight; close shave at a quarter past; breakfast at nine; to the city at ten; home again at half-past five; dinner at seven." That is the programme for the day; and the programme for the year is to repeat it so many hundred times. As with the egg-breaker so here the total impression is of sheer futility. Getting down to fundamentals there is not much to choose between thirty years of Podsnap's programme and thirty years of the egg-breaker's.

The American novel, *Babbitt*, yields the same impression, whether designedly or not I do not

know. The background of that story, it will be remembered, is the life of a large and prosperous city of rapid growth, where all the mechanical apparatus of civilization is running at high pressure. If you look at that life in detail, if you take the personalities and the actions one by one, you would say that nothing could be less monotonous. It is like a kaleidoscope where all is restless change and shifting scenery, no two moments alike, no person the copy of another. But if you look at it all, not in detail, but in the grand outlines of it, in the totality of what it is, then it strikes you as always the same, not moving to any assignable goal, but endlessly repeating itself, endlessly revolving round the same centre, a completely vicious circle, which, when once you get into, you can never get out of, try as you may. There is poor Babbitt himself, a most pathetic figure. You see him caught in the revolution, vainly struggling from time to time to strike out an independent course, but always falling back into the senseless round from nowhere to nowhere. All that happens in the way of change is the continual acceleration of the pace; the whirl goes faster and faster, which only renders the

people who are in it the more powerless to get out of it. This is a very truthful picture of hundreds of cities all over the world and perhaps of industrial civilization in general—the life of the egg-breaker writ large, the life of Podsnap expanded to a social phenomenon.

A similar thought crosses the mind when watching the innumerable motorcars which throng the streets. Each separate car is clearly going somewhere, but the totality of the cars appears to be going nowhere—just moving, as a fermentation moves. You can assign a definite destination to the single car—but not to the totality.

So too in a great assembly when three or four hundred people are talking all at once. Each separate speaker is saying something significant to his neighbour, but the totality of the voices is a meaningless roar, a big noise in which the very form of human language is lost. The parts mean something, the whole—nothing.

The same phenomenon on a still larger scale is presented by human progress in general, or at least by a well-known version of it. There

is a way of presenting human progress which reduces it to the endless self-repetition, under different terms, of the same identical formula, a movement from nothing to nothing, a Podsnap-programme writ large over the face of the centuries. Mr. Bertrand Russell is not so far as I know a believer in that doctrine, but there are chapters in the *Prospects of Industrial Civilization* which leave the impression of an appalling monotony in the history of mankind. In one of his chapters he speculates, with his usual brilliance, on the various regroupings of the nations, the readjustments of political and economic power that the future is likely to bring forth—a chapter in which the Americans seemed destined to get the best of it.

But from the point of view of mankind it makes no difference who gets the best of it, the Americans or anybody else, because the new situation, created by these apparent changes, is nothing but the old situation with the factors of it transposed. It is like an equation in algebra in which the quantities on either side can be put on the other side by simply changing *plus* into *minus* and *minus* into *plus*, but without making any difference to the significance

of the equation as a whole, which always yields the same result, namely, that $x = 0$. According to Mr. Russell the two main forces which determine the distribution of power among nations are cupidity and fear; in every rearrangement of power this formula repeats itself; the final arrangement, like the present one, being only the old farce of cupidity and fear performed by new actors. The changes that go on are kaleidoscopic in their detail, but viewed synoptically the whole operation is perfectly meaningless, like the egg-breaker's life, like Podsnap's programme, like Babbitt's environment. In a world ruled permanently by cupidity and fear it makes no atom of difference to ultimate values whether we live now, or whether we live a thousand years from now; whether the Americans get the best of it, or the Chinese. At all stages of the process the answer is the same. The equation grows ever more complicated, until the sheet is not big enough to contain all the terms of it. But beneath this vast complication of terms a truth lies hidden that is exactly the same as it was when the equation stood in its simplest form—the truth, namely, that $x = 0$ —the equation of

the egg-breaker, of Podsnap, and of Babbitt, of the motor-cars, and of the roar of voices.

2

We have followed this into a wide field—from the egg-breaker to the history of civilization. But a further extension awaits us. We can expand the theme to the cosmic scale. There are philosophies, both ancient and modern, which regard the evolution of the entire universe as a meaningless process of self-repetition—a vicious circle that moves from nothing to nothing and embraces all created things—the doom of the whole creation groaning and travailing together in the boredom of endless monotony. “Alike among the pessimistic religions of India, the teachings of Heraclitus and Plato concerning the shadow side of our existence, the ideas of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche about the eternal cycles, we encounter the same theme over and over again: the entire secular process is an everlasting repetition—the totality of which yields nothing new.” So writes the late Prince Eugene Troubetzkoy: it is a line of thought that seems to have a peculiar attrac-

tion for the Russian mind. Troubetzkoy goes on to quote an instance from Dostoievsky's great novel, *The Brothers*. The Devil is speaking to one of the brothers. "You are always thinking of the earth as it exists to-day," says the Devil. "Well, let me tell you that the earth as it exists to-day has been repeated millions of times in the past; each time it perished, disintegrated, turned into dust, and decomposed; after that a fresh nebula was formed, then a comet, a new solar system, a new earth. The whole of this evolution has been repeated times without end, always precisely in the same manner down to the minutest details. One is bored to death to think of it."

In these words, which are rightly placed in the mouth of the Devil, we sound the lowest depths of pessimism. The entire cosmic process has now reduced itself to the everlasting equation that $x = 0$. When all has been accomplished that can be undertaken, when the system of nature has exhausted its possibilities, when evolution has reached its goal, when all conceivable perfectibilities have been attained, when the dream of an Earthly Paradise has been fulfilled, when the causes have triumphed

for which heroes fight and martyrs suffer and lovers break their hearts—all must perish and begin again, repeating the process to the minutest detail, only to perish in like manner when its course is run, and so on for ever and ever. Not a tear has been shed but must be shed again, not a drop of blood has been spilt but must be spilt again, not a heart broken but must break again, and again, and again, through endless eternity, whenever the remorseless cycle returns to the point where that drop of blood was spilt, where that tear was shed, where that heart was broken before. Well may the Devil say it bores one to *death* to think of it.

For Death is the keynote of the entire process, as well as of the reactions it provokes in us. In contemplating a futility so dreadful our very souls seem to expire. It is not only we that die but the whole cosmos of which we are the infinitesimal parts—and for no end save that it may live and die again. Death has dominion over it all. The equation of our life is the equation of all existence. Disguised under the immense complexity of the phenomena that confront us, hidden by phraseology which has perhaps been contrived for the express purpose of

hiding it, lies the formula, embedded in the very structure of things, that $x = 0$.

A Moment's Halt—a momentary taste
Of Being from the Well amid the Waste—
And Lo! the phantom Caravan has reached
The Nothing it set out from. Oh, make haste!

It will rightly be said that this intolerable philosophy, familiar as it was in the ancient world, and still is in the East, is not and never can be the creed of the energetic Western nations. And yet I venture to think that even in these “practical” times, with their discoveries, adventures, exploitations, and noisy successes, there does arise in us from time to time a dim disturbing suspicion, a haunting half-thought, that the whole enterprise on which we are engaged is futile. It is the inarticulate voice of that “deeper self which lives in the presence of Death.”¹ Mr. Bertrand Russell, for example, who is an eager reformer, keenly conscious of certain ends that are worth striving for, has his moments of profound depression when, as he himself confesses, he would welcome the advent of a kindly comet to put an end to the antics of man on the planet. And this may be

¹ A phrase of Dean Inge.

observed in general: that while very few people will acknowledge themselves pessimists, most people will listen with interest to the philosophy of pessimism as though they found in it an echo of something in their own minds, an echo, perhaps, of that "deeper self which lives in the presence of Death."

There is a vague belief that civilization is moving to an end that is really worth while. But when we are asked to define the end most of us are at a loss; and our inability to define it sometimes causes a doubt as to whether there is any end at all. But Life is full of excitements and distractions; and our misgivings, if we have any, are easily drowned. We have little time for meditating on Death and Eternity and little inclination to do so. Besides all which, we live in an atmosphere deeply influenced by Christian tradition. And that makes a great difference, even to those who have ceased to be conscious adherents of any form of Christianity. In all Christian countries there is a rumour abroad that Death, and all the frustrations from Death, have been overcome; that the vicious circle of existence has somehow been broken at that point; that a way

of deliverance has been found from the meaningless whirlpool of self-repetition; and that men, therefore, may go on living their lives as though Death didn't count. There is a vague rumour to that effect; not a positive solution of the problem consciously grasped, but a reminiscence of the fact that Someone, somewhere, has broken the circle. It belongs to the atmosphere we are breathing, this tradition that the Challenge of Death has been successfully met and answered.

The Challenge of Death is the summary challenge addressed by the universe to man. It is the spear-point of the Challenge of Life, not to be evaded on any terms, as the fashion now is with many to evade it. To find a good in life which is worth achieving in spite of the fact, consciously realized, that this visible scene on which we operate, and we, the visible agents who operate, will presently be gathered to the dark death-kingdoms and enfolded in the everlasting Silence—that is the spear-point of the Challenge, the acid test of philosophy, the point where philosophy must either pass into religion or retire, beaten, from the field. The philosopher may be unaware of this, often is, or will

even go out of his way to repudiate all interest in the matter; but in the audience that gathers round his feet there is always a vague hope, and sometimes a poignant one, that he will come at last to the critical point where Life and Death stand confronting one another in a "fell incensed opposition," that he will let fall the word of wisdom which is to end that conflict and release the mind from the tension it involves—perhaps by teaching contentment with annihilation, perhaps by an argument for *carpe diem*, perhaps by proving personal immortality. Without that motive, subtly operating in all our curiosities about "mind and matter," "good and evil," "reality and appearance," there would be no market for the philosopher's goods; his performance would be offered to an empty house. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed," says Saint Paul, "is death." The last—and the most formidable. All other enemies may have been overcome: poverty, misery, crime, injustice, whatever ills beset the path of man in his stormy passage through the world; but so long as there is nothing but extinction at the end, not for the individual alone but for the whole system to which he belongs,

what does it all amount to? This raising of richer harvests for Death to reap, which is all your secular progress can boast of, this fattening of victims for the universal sacrifice, which is all your philanthropy can achieve—is that the triumph of man? Does the victim feel his doom the lighter because he has been well fed up to the moment of his immolation? And what difference does it make if you feed his mind as well as his body? Take Socrates at the moment of his final extinction, and what is the difference between him and the vilest of mankind, except it be that the death of the villain is a good riddance and the death of Socrates an irreparable loss? And so with the human race as a whole. Whatever satisfaction may be felt as we watch the ascent of man on one side of the mountain, through all the stages of rising value, to the apex of the Earthly Paradise, is it not all wiped out as we contemplate the inevitable return journey which brings him back stage by stage to the starting-point and then engulfs him in the Universal Death? For every *plus* on the one side there is a *minus* on the other, and the end of the equation, as before, is that $x = 0$.

If this were the conclusion of the whole matter the blackest pessimism would be left in possession of the field of thought and the human race might curse the day when it was born.

3

To what purpose, the reader will be asking, has a line of thought been pursued which leads to a result so disastrous? I have pursued it for this reason: it is only by frankly facing the disaster, by measuring it to the whole extent, by extenuating nothing of its significance, that we can understand the nature of religion in the fulness of its majesty and power.

Religion is being presented to the world today in forms which are quite inadequate to the problem it has to solve, which belittle religion into a mere re-enforcement, often a slight re-enforcement, of the powers of man in fighting the battle of his temporal interests; as, for example, when we define it as morality touched with emotion, the emotion being the slight re-enforcement brought on to the battlefield. Religion is infinitely greater than that. It is the power that faces the Challenge of Life when

it comes to its spear-point in the Challenge of Death, and, by winning the victory there, wins it everywhere else. The last enemy to be destroyed is Death, the summary frustration—not alone as it affects the individual but as the doom of the visible system to which he belongs—of societies, of civilizations, of planets, of suns, and of stars; so that not man only but the whole creation, groaning and travailing together in pain until now, shall be delivered from the vicious circle of meaningless self-repetition, from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. A complete transfiguration of the meaning of life—such is the victory that religion wins by facing the Challenge of the last enemy and by destroying *that*. All frustrations come to a head in Death. Destroy that and you destroy them all. They sink into insignificance. They become light afflictions not worthy to be compared to the glory that is revealed. A religion which overcomes all other enemies, but yet turns tail or puts its head in the sand when the last enemy sounds his challenge, is a vanquished religion.

Such is the scope and majesty of religion, as it was conceived by the original genius of

Christianity, and by the great teachers of India. That vision has passed away from the modern world. It must be restored if the churches are to live. The old terminology, indeed, may never come back, and need not. But the power must be recovered which can meet the Challenge of Life in the most intense of its manifestations—the Challenge of Death.

I know not how that can be done except by confronting the very worst that pessimism has to say to us. Beyond the need of accommodating religion to science, of reconciling it with democratic aspirations, of using it as a motive for social and political reform, all of which needs, if pressed too hard, belittle religion into a mere re-enforcement of our moral powers, a serviceable handmaid of our secular interests, and leave us overthrown in the final encounter—beyond all that there is a deeper need. We must grasp the nettle. Like Arnold of Winkelried religion must put her arms round the spears and gather them into her bosom. In all these accommodations and reconciliations there is no answer to that sense of an overarching futility which haunts the background of our minds, the deeper self that stands in the pres-

ence of Death and is not to be silenced by loud-tongued doctrines of “progress,” which seem to have been invented for the vain purpose of shouting it down.

Nor is the Challenge of Life, brought thus to its point in the Challenge of Death, to be met by the Doctrine of Personal Immortality—certainly not by that alone. The answer lies in a far deeper and more comprehensive thought, from which our personal immortality may follow as a sequence, but of which it is not the whole nor even the beginning.

The answer lies in the thought that the history of this visible universe, the whole presentation of it in space and time, is no more than a fragment, perhaps no more than a shadow, of its reality. As revealed to our senses, as apprehended by our faculties of perception, the universe is a *thing*, a lifeless object, infinite in extent and duration, but as dead as any stone. Death has dominion over the whole of it. Save in the spots where life has exceptionally appeared for a season in its nooks and crevices, the universe is all one vast empire of Death. Thought of in that way, as an immensity of dead matter and blind force, the impression it

makes upon the mind is dreadful. One's heart breaks in the presence of it. To be alive in such a universe is to be alive in a tomb. Look up to the firmament on a clear night, stretch your imagination to the immensities it reveals to you, then think of it as all *dead mechanism*—and you will encounter the Challenge of Death in its most poignant and tremendous form.

But what if it is not all dead? What if all is alive—alive as we are, but with richness and fulness of life which compare with ours as the ocean compares with a drop of water? Well, there is a spiritual insight which has seen just that. There is a way of thought that meets the Challenge of Death by affirming just that. We call it the doctrine of Divine Immanence, which is the philosopher's way of saying that the whole universe is alive—not a dead thing to be exploited, but a living Being to be loved.

The Divine Immanence—a weak thing, surely, if you approach it as a mere theme for controversy, but a power stronger than Death to those who have felt it in the calmer moments of their lives—and there are many such even in these noisy years. “There shall be a depth of silence in thee deeper than this sea,

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which is but ten miles deep: a Silence unsoundable, known to God only." "The great Empire of Silence: higher than the stars; deeper than the Kingdoms. It alone is great; all else is small." Not in the atmosphere of our controversial interests, not on the field where vociferous theologies are striving with one another as to which shall be greatest, but in the depth of that unsoundable Silence will the secret be found which makes us victors over the last enemy—the *religion* whose scope and majesty are more than a match for Death. Entering through the Silence into conscious fellowship with the life of the Living Universe, we ask no further question about our personal immortality, for eternal life is already won. There is no aspect of our experience but will have its part in that great transfiguration, no form of Life's Challenge but will be met with a bolder courage, the bright hours growing brighter, the dark hours growing bright. The Immanence of God! Not a new form of theological contention, but the silent answer of the soul to the Challenge of Death, the spear-point of the Challenge of Life.

Religion is universal; not in the superficial

sense that every man has some of it, but in the far deeper sense that it transfigures the meaning of the entire universe in which we live and die, and of which we are living and dying parts. Under the touch of religion every phenomenon in the universe changes the fashion of its countenance: the corruptible puts on incorruption; the mortal puts on immortality; every atom in the structure of things rises from death to life in a general resurrection, its face shining as the sun, its garments becoming whiter than the light. Death hath no more dominion over it.

Religion is no “beneficent extra.” Nor can you say of it, as Matthew Arnold said of “conduct,” that it constitutes three-fourths of life; nor ninety-nine hundredths of life; nor any larger fraction you choose to name. It is the principle of a universal transvaluation, which makes all things new, pain becoming joy, law becoming love, Death becoming Life.

II: The Mind in Tension

II: The Mind in Tension

I do not expect the complete agreement of my reader with what I have written up to this point. If he is young, young enough to be looking forward to life from one or other of its many thresholds, he will probably feel—and is to be respected for feeling—that there is something radically false in the pessimistic conclusions we have been considering.

“Even if it be true,” he will say, “that the equation of life always ends in the formula $x = 0$, and that the presence of death among the other terms must inevitably reduce their total value to zero, still the equation itself is a marvel of intellectual beauty, and the working out of it, in spite of its negative result, a delightful occupation. At least it may become so. To the egg-breaker, to Podsnap and to Bab-bitt, the monotony, the futility of it all is, of course, dreadful; but this is only because the equation, as they encounter it, is too simple a structure to be interesting, as though one were

endlessly employed in subtracting two from two and writing down 0 as the result. But give a man such variety of interest as he would have under an 'improved social system'; diversify the journey of his life by constant change of level and of scenery; lead it off along pleasant side-tracks, keeping the man in good health meanwhile, and then the fact that it all returns to the zero point from which it started matters not at all. He has had his innings; the game has been a fair one; and what more does he want, what more is he entitled to ask?"

The argument, as we thus set it out, runs smoothly, looks well and has a pleasant sound. It expresses something which we all feel to be true. But it does not express all that we feel. The very fact that we find it necessary to affirm our optimism by producing such an argument shows that we are conscious of something else, which pulls towards an opposite conclusion and has to be resisted, something with enough truth on its side to break us unless we stiffen our backs and hold our own.

And must we not add that the alleged "delightfulness" of the game will be very consid-

erably reduced, nay, altogether spoilt, if we *know in advance* that it will end in the purely negative result that $x = 0$. If we know it not, or if, knowing it, we can contrive to forget it, the affair no doubt will go on merrily enough as long as it lasts. But if the negative end of it is staring us in the face all the time we shall not find it so easy to enjoy ourselves.

One of the deepest and subtlest differences that thought has to deal with is the difference between *being in a certain state* and being *conscious of what state you are in*. To be suffering toothache is one thing: to be conscious that it is toothache you are suffering is another. A pig may suffer the toothache; but it needs a human mind to draw the distinction between an ache in the tooth and an ache in the toe and to identify the particular pain under the one denomination rather than the other. The pig has both tooth and toe, and makes good use of both according to his kind; but he does not "so much as know that there is any tooth, or any toe." He has no map of his anatomy to guide him to such discriminations. He is in the state of suffering the toothache, but he is not conscious of what state he is in. In thinking of him as

though he were we are importing our psychology into his darkened mind—a very common error with psychologists.

The distinction between being in a certain state and being *conscious* of what state we are in is never more important than when we are *arguing*—arguing about anything, but most of all when we are arguing about ourselves, about our life and its values. If we catch ourselves in the act of arguing—as Fichte used to urge his pupils—we shall always find that the argument as we set it out on paper is by no means all we are conscious of.

Let us catch ourselves, for example, in the act of conducting the argument of the last section, and of holding the pessimistic conclusion to which it leads, namely, that $x = 0$, that life is meaningless. The first fact that will strike us is that the conclusion when reached has to be *held*. The will is intensely active throughout the entire operation. At every stage of our reasoning there is some optimistic illusion to be resisted, some attractive error to be thrust aside, some counter-reasoning to be met and overcome. Our conscious state is misrepresented if we describe it as that of passively fol-

lowing in the wake of an abstraction called "Truth," as though our minds were merely drifting in a stream of thought, until finally they come to "rest" in the conclusion. Our argument, on the contrary, is a *strenuous* affair and the consciousness of the strain never leaves us. If we declare that life is meaningless, that is only because we are conscious of another philosophy, of another argument, which says the opposite and against which we have to hold our own. Instead, therefore, of drifting to our conclusion, like a log of wood carried down by a stream, our minds are like the swimmer who fights his way across and feels at every stroke the pressure of contrary forces. Nor do we *rest* in our conclusion when we reach it. We *hold* it; we hang on to it; we tighten our grip upon it, we defy all comers to make us budge, conscious the while that the forces which have been resisting our approach to the conclusion are still resisting us and will drive us off from it unless we keep them at bay.

It may be that our reasoning has led us to adopt an attitude of resignation—of resignation to the utterly unmeaning character of the

universe and of life. But we shall find that the state of resignation, on its conscious side, is just as strenuous as any other, nay, perhaps, the most strenuous of all. To be resigned will be found on trial to cost more effort, more untiring vigilance, and to involve a deeper consciousness of strain than any other "attitude" we might choose to adopt. There is no "rest" in resignation, because at every moment we seek to practise it we hear within us a contrary voice which bids us *not* to be resigned and counsels revolt; nor can any of us profess to be resigned until that voice is effectively silenced—as it never can be. Even the Buddhist who believes that he has won Nirvana cannot afford to rest upon his conquest; he must keep watch and maintain his disciplines unrelaxed; otherwise the desires, which resisted his entry upon Nirvana, and which he has now killed, will wake to life again and rob him of his bliss. Indeed, there is no philosophy, no "attitude," no faith, no virtue possible to man which does not involve, as one of its essential elements, a conscious resistance to its opposite. Is he resigned? It is because he is silencing the voices of revolt. Is he wise? It is because he is

suppressing his follies. Is he virtuous? It is because he is holding his vices at bay. Is he free? It is because he "wins his freedom afresh every day." Is he spiritual? It is because he is at war with matter, whose power he knows. Is he joyous? It is because he is not unacquainted with grief. Let him catch himself at the moment when he argues his case —when he proclaims his philosophy, when he defends his "attitude," when he asserts his character, when, by act or word, he gives expression to his faith, and let him note in himself that consciousness of strain caused by *a pull the other way*, which never fails to accompany the highest acts of his mind, and which he is now meeting and resisting by this philosophy of his, by his "attitude," by his character, by his faith. His pessimism is the answer to something which, if he suffered it to sway him, would make him an optimist. His optimism is the answer to something which, if he suffered it to sway him, would make him a pessimist. His mind is the battle-ground of the two; his consciousness is alive with the strain of their conflict. That he has a philosophy or a faith does not mean that his battle is over; it means

that he is fighting his battle with the weapons his philosophy or his faith has put into his hands. Except for the doctrine he opposes he would hardly be aware of the doctrine he affirms; his affirmation of it being at once an expression and a relief of the strain in his consciousness caused by the felt opposition of the two.

When, therefore, an optimist defends his optimism by an appropriate philosophy he is not merely answering a pessimist who lives over the way; primarily he is answering a pessimist who lives in his own breast. The pessimist over the way would be insignificant, and it would never occur to us to answer him, were it not for something within us which feels the force of what he has to say. That we argue with him at all proves that we have found enough reason on his side to make him worth arguing with; were he altogether absurd we should leave him alone. The truth is, we are a little afraid of him, we have reasons for being anxious lest he should get the better of us: of which reasons the chief is this, that his voice, which now comes to us from the other side of the street and seems to belong to another person, becomes at times so

like our own that we seem to be talking to ourselves.

The argument with which we crush our opponent derives its vigour from these fears; its ingenuities are prompted by these anxieties; it expresses the strain of our consciousness at that point; it is the effort we make to disengage ourselves from "the fell incensed points of mighty opposites," whose conflict is internal to ourselves. "The Kingdom of God," we have been told, "is within you." But where else is the kingdom of the devil? Both are clearly within us; but to decide which is which is not always easy. Incessant interaction goes on between them; at every point of our experience they pull both ways at the same moment, and our consciousness, like the all-pervading ether, is "the system of strains," created by their oppositions, truth straining against error, good against evil, virtue against vice, pleasure against pain, joy against grief, fact against illusion, life against death.

Our existence as self-conscious beings is *a conscious tension*; an affirmation of ourselves against something that threatens to disintegrate us and to annihilate our selfhood; an act in-

cessantly renewed. In the realm of selfhood there are no natural endowments. All that exists there has to be won through self-affirmation, and to every form of self-affirmation possible to man there exists an opposition, through the overcoming of which, and not otherwise, that particular affirmation of the self must be achieved. Would I do evil? I must defy my conscience, which never ceases to protest. Would I do good? I must restrain the passions that are tugging at my will and asserting their indisputable rights. Am I preaching a spiritual faith? All the time I can hear within me the voice of a materialist, clamouring for recognition, which is as clearly my own voice as is this other which is pleading for the things of the spirit. Am I preaching materialism? My spiritual nature answers, "No, no," and quickens my ingenuity in confuting it. Is religion my theme? There is one who rises up within me and cries, "All that is nonsense," and I must fight him with my back to the wall. I shift my ground; I choose a new position: I turn myself this way and that—but the tension is never released, the "system of strains" is never escaped from. The form of it may change but the na-

ture of it is ever the same. No position in the world of thought that is not threatened from a neighbouring height. Every city of refuge that is offered me I discover, from the moment I enter it, to be in a state of siege.

"They promised me peace if I would join them," says one whom we know, "and the first sound I heard when I entered their gates was the voice of a great multitude singing in unison,

"'Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war.'

"I soon found," he goes on, "that the peace of God, which they had promised me, and which I actually experienced as I became accustomed to their ways, is, by its very nature, a *threatened* peace. Again and again it seemed on the point of leaving me; nay, there were times when I lost it completely. For my part, I was ever in the attitude of resisting robbers intent on capturing my peace, or of calling it back, when the world, by its violence or subtlety, would filch it away. Great was the anxiety of my soul about this peace of mine, for it was the treasure I valued most. They had told me that

the world could not *give* it; and this, I think, was true. But they had also said the world could not take it away; this, most assuredly, was false. The world was in active conspiracy to take it away, and often did so, beating down my resistance and making a mock of my high citadel. I prayed, I fasted, I practised myself in self-denial, I rose early in the morning and took the sacrament, always with the secret dread upon me that if I relaxed in these spiritual exercises my peace would go—as sometimes it did. It was a strenuous life—this life of mine in the House of Peace. There were moments when the strain of it would have been intolerable, but for the grace of God, and when, even with the grace of God to help me, it was all that I could bear. ‘Take from our souls,’ we used to cry,

“‘Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.’

I doubt if the prayer was ever answered. Peace would often be taken away, and then there was the strain and stress of recovering it. Our peace was itself a state of tension, the motion-

less balance of opposing forces, the perfect counterpoise of equal weights, in which the soul was aware of neither only because it sustained them both. Never was the tension higher than when we were *consciously* at peace.

"I studied the faces of the brethren—my companions in the House of Peace. Closely scrutinized they were all the faces of valiant men; and some were deeply scarred. All betokened the consciousness of being 'on an engagement very difficult.' One was a great strategist; I have never seen a glance more vigilant, a brow more burdened with care. He was the main guardian of our peace and we called him our Tower of Defence. He had planned our fortifications; his eye was on every move in the besiegers' camp; the secret approaches of Doubt and Fear were all known to him; and often when the moment seemed propitious he would send us forth to the counter-attack—from which not all of us came back alive. Another was a master in martial music; his were the strains that roused our courage when the Peace of God was most in jeopardy, and our hearts were turning to water within us. Another was an expert in suffering; there was

no way of pain that he had not trodden; he taught us to bear our wounds, which were many; when our nerve was breaking under the tension of long vigils he restored our self-control; without him the strategy and the martial music would not have saved us from surrender to unrest.

"So we fared in the House of Peace, ever on the watch, ever prepared for emergencies, ever keeping our forces in training for the moment when doubt and fear and pain and death would put us to the test. There were critical times when all seemed lost, and other times when the overthrow of our adversaries was so complete that we began to demolish our fortifications and to live at ease in Zion, hoping (but not wisely) to be unmolested for the remainder of our days and saying to one another 'our peace is assured at last.' "

At this point the information ceases, and we are left to reconstruct the subsequent history of this friend of ours as best we can. That he had left his old companions was clear, for, when he told us his story, he was no longer dwelling in any House of Peace, speaking of his experience there as a thing of the past. Had he dis-

covered that escape from the tension of life is not possible; that the most we can do is to choose between this form of it and that; and that no form of tension is less profitable for a man than *the tension of trying to escape from tension?* This, clearly, is what he had been doing in the House of Peace, to which he had fled as a city of refuge, but found in a state of siege. Had the effort, then, broken him down? From the look on the man's face, from his bearing, from the tone of his voice—and we have little else to go by—we think it had not. Calm, resolute, self-centred was the semblance of him—a man still capable of enduring strains and of facing odds without losing his poise, essentially an unbroken man. Had experience (the great teacher of us all) taught him his salutary lesson—that the highest moral act a human soul can perform is the willing acceptance of the tension of life? “From what smallest particle of the universe is tension absent? From what largest mass? Is not the all-pervading ether a system of strains? Is not the orbit of a planet the emergent outcome of contrary pulls between centripetal and centrifugal forces? And what is the soul of man but ‘the

universe turned outside in'? How then can the soul escape from that which the universe reveals, in the whole and in the parts, as the life of its operations and the law of its being? How can it refuse what the universe accepts?" We imagine that thoughts such as these must have weighed with our friend, until at length he could face his own nature without flinching, that a moment came when the truth broke in upon him that release from the tension of life is nothing other than the cessation of life itself—the death of the soul. We picture him rejoicing in that discovery: we see him walking out from his fortress with a light step and a radiant countenance. "Evil is the tension of life when we seek to escape from it," so his thoughts will have run, "evil when we seek to escape from it as I have hitherto been doing; but good, and endlessly good, when closed with and willingly accepted."

III: Anxiety for the Morrow

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No precept more paradoxical has ever been addressed to the will of man than that which bids him not be anxious for the morrow. Regarded from one angle it is a precept of death, a command to commit suicide. Anxiety for the morrow belongs to the very stuff of which life is composed; without it the life of to-day would be impossible—impossible for the wise man as for the fool, for the saint as for the sinner. In life as we consciously live it, which differs widely from life as theorized about in philosophies, there is ever a twofold strain—the pull of the future and the grip of the past, the present being the name we give to the point at which we are conscious of the interaction. The difference here between the wise man and the fool, between the saint and the sinner, is not that the first are less anxious for the morrow than the second but more. The difference is that the anxieties of the wise man are more intimately interwoven with the texture of his ex-

perience; they are concerned with issues that are more worth while and therefore more momentous. His liberation from the anxieties of the flesh—if that be the form his wisdom has taken—has but left him the more exposed to the anxieties of the spirit—the more poignant of the two, by far. He may change the name and call his state of mind “solicitude,” but the essential nature of it is unchanged. Did not the author of the precept himself confess to this? “I have a baptism to be baptized with,” he cried, “and how am I *straitened* till it be accomplished.” May we not say that the higher we pitch the object of our life the greater becomes our anxiety for its achievement? Had anxiety for the morrow no place in Gethsemane?

Self-forgetfulness makes no difference at the essential point. By living for “others” I merely transfer the source of anxiety from my own future to theirs—unless, indeed, these “others” have become to me mere abstractions, or dead counters in a game, with no part to play save that of passively yielding to my benevolent ministrations, of doing as I tell them, of imbibing the wisdom I choose to impart for their guid-

ance. But the wise man knows they are nothing of the kind. The "others" whom he would serve react to his ministrations in ways that surprise and often disappoint him: they misunderstand his clearest speech, or, understanding it, go wrong in the application; he teaches but they do not learn; he pipes but they will not dance. From the moment we have rightly conceived what manner of men these "others" really are, each one a replica of our own wayward and unpredictable selves, our anxiety for their "morrow" becomes immense. Will they respond, and if so how? Having heard the word and accepted it will they afterwards "remove to another gospel?" Bidden to have no anxiety for the morrow we may well ask *whose* morrow is intended? My own? Be it so. But the morrow of those whom we love, the morrow of the "others" we fain would serve, the morrow of our fellowmen, the morrow of our civilization—who of us would deem himself the better man for not being anxious about all that? If we say, as some have done, that these things do not trouble our peace, does not the very fact of our saying so reveal a secret consciousness that our peace is threatened and insecure? If

we are content to "leave the future in the hand of God," does not the act of so leaving it put our spiritual nature to its utmost strain, and when the act of resignation is accomplished is there no anxiety lest the "morrow" should find us in another state of mind? Spiritual acts are continuous. All alike involve the *maintenance of their continuity*, the "anxiety" lest the morrow should see them at an end. There is no such thing as forgetting oneself once and for all, nor of surrendering oneself, nor of dedicating oneself. The forgetting, the surrendering, the dedicating must be achieved "afresh every day." That which has been won must be *kept*, and the tension of keeping it will never be less than the tension of winning it.

"Be not anxious for the morrow," might almost be interpreted as irony. When we consider how closely anxiety for the morrow is interwoven with the texture of our being, how integral it is to the stuff of consciousness, do we not see that the effort to reduce this anxiety, and to hold it at bay would be, of all the efforts that man could make, precisely the most anxious? Like the man who keeps himself awake by the efforts he makes to go to sleep, we should

defeat ourselves in the very act of putting the precept into practice. We delude ourselves when we think of "not being anxious" as a mere negative state. Like all conscious states it is highly positive; it involves the action of the will in keeping anxiety at arm's length. It betokens the exchange of a lower tension for a higher.

In which respect it conforms to the general character of moral activity. In the moral life the advance is ever from the less difficult to the more, the supreme immorality being the wish to have it otherwise. He who would lead the good life must prepare himself for a continually intensifying self-affirmation along paths which grow steeper as they ascend. The good man has a baptism to be baptized with and is straitened till it be accomplished. The more virtue he wins the more he has to keep in exercise. Every one of his virtues will leave him unless he continues to assert it, to win it afresh day by day. The more of his lower nature he leaves behind him the more there is of it to hold him back, to resist his further advance, to challenge his self-affirmation in overcoming it. Like a suppressed rebel his lower nature waits for

opportunities to reassert itself; only after long subjection, if even then, can any part of it be said, definitely, to die. The conquests of yesterday are always precarious and, as the conquered territory increases, the greater becomes the demand on the wisdom and skill, on the patience and alacrity, on the courage and vigour, on the charity and forbearance of the central government—which is the good-will of the good man.

IV: Evil or Good?

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ARE these conditions evil or good?

Evil, most assuredly, if we seek to escape from them, if they tempt us to long for a safe place in the universe, for a city of refuge either in this world or in any other, where wisdom and skill, patience and alacrity, courage and vigour, charity and forbearance will no longer be demanded of us. Evil, most assuredly, for the man who looks upon "happiness" as the end and aim of his being and upon "unhappiness" as a thwarting of his destiny or a deprivation of his rights. Let all such be pessimists. Let them note well that happiness is essentially fugitive; that it does not come to stay, but begins to depart from the moment of its arrival; that when attained, whether by good fortune or by effort, it has to be *kept* and will fly away if it is not; that the process of keeping it when won continues the strain of winning it and is, in fact, the same process endlessly repeated, so that men and nations to whom the means of happy-

ness have come in great abundance must toil on lest their winnings should be lost, as they toiled in their time of poverty, consuming their lives, not in the enjoyment of their good fortune, but in precautions against the spoiling of it by robbery and corruption, by moth and by rust. This also let them note: that "the grander features of human character—self-sacrifice, disregard of pleasure, patriotism, love of knowledge, devotion to any great and good cause—have no tendency to bring men what is called fortune. They do not even necessarily promote their happiness; for do what they will in this way, the horizon of what they desire to do perpetually flies before them. High hopes and enthusiasms are generally disappointed in results; and the wrongs, the cruelties, the wretchedness of all kinds which for ever prevail among mankind—the shortcomings in himself of which he becomes more conscious in himself as he becomes really better—these things prevent a noble-minded man from ever being particularly happy."¹ Let the seeker of happiness, whether his own or others', ponder these things and close at once with the pessimistic conclusion

¹ Froude, *Short Studies in Great Subjects*.

that the universe is *not* on his side. For him, we say, the reality of things, as revealed by the great lessons of human experience, is, most assuredly, evil. The "happiness" philosophy can lead to no other conclusion. The universe is not primarily concerned with happiness. It has more important business on hand. So has the soul of man, which is the universe turned outside in.

Yet these are the only conditions in which a being made as man is could find the employment his nature demands. Like the universe whose structure he reflects, man is the bearer of a strain, the exponent of an everlasting tension. By his existence as a self-conscious being he perpetually affirms himself against an opposite. Strictly speaking, he has but one alternative before him—that of being employed as a strain-bearer or of being cast out as a wastrel for whom the universe has no use. He stands (like St. Paul) "in a strait betwixt two," pulled both ways at the same time, and affirms himself by *standing*, by holding himself erect against the pressure of forces which threaten his overthrow from either side and would overthrow him were his self-affirmation relaxed.

His philosophies, his religion, his faiths, his scepticisms, his affirmations and denials are so many names for the different positions in which he proposes to *stand*, for the different attitudes of his self-affirmation against an opposite. Far from furnishing relief to the tension, these philosophies and religions are themselves expressions of it; they represent the intensity of it, and they do so irrespective of the conclusion in which they rest, positive or negative, dogma or doubt, spiritual or material, Nirvana or the Kingdom of God. Outside of these conditions the word "good" has no meaning. Inside of them lies all the "good" that is or can be. For the highest good we can attain to, or even think of, is the full employment of our nature in harmony with a living universe, itself fully employed from the totality of it to the smallest of the constituent atoms.

V: The Tension of Life and Death

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WE have now before us the conception of man as a strain-bearer, of his consciousness as revealing the strain that he bears, of his will as the self-affirmation which maintains his integrity in this condition, thereby accumulating power and extending the range of the self affirmed in the direction of whatever excellence lies within its reach. This we have named the tension of life. Let us note some of the forms that it assumes in our experience.

We see it as the simultaneous pull of our “higher” and “lower” natures each against the other, the affirmation of our “higher” nature at any moment being meaningless unless we suppose that the “lower” is, there and then, actively straining to the contrary issue. We see it in the life of thought, of philosophy, when the affirmation of what we believe to be true is our reaction to some active error or ignorance, whose force we are at least sufficiently

conscious of to feel that the refutation of it is worth while. We see it in the life of the affections, in the life of love, which rises in conscious intensity through the tightening of our grip on the beloved object, through our resistance to the forces that would deprive us of it or spoil our relationship with it. We see it in religion, where faith carries doubt in its arms and affirms itself by standing erect beneath the burden. We see it in science, where the truth of what is holds off the plausible error of what seems to be. We see it in art, where not even a line can be drawn straight without overcoming the tendency to draw it crooked.

These instances might be endlessly multiplied, but we must hasten on to the form of tension which includes, summarizes and typifies them all. This is the tension between life and death, the tension of minds, of souls, if you will, that are consciously alive and yet intimately aware that "destiny cannot doom them not to die." "There is in every man a deeper self that lives in the presence of death."

In the young this deeper self lies far down beneath the threshold of consciousness, rising to the surface now and then as a passing fit of

sadness they do not understand, as a flitting shadow shed by an object too distant to be identified.

But as we grow older it begins to emerge into the illuminated area of the mind and to acquire an intelligible language; and the two selves, the one looking forward from the threshold, the other backward from the brink, break out into rival systems of valuation whose conflict can only be ended by the transvaluation of the values they severally announce. This is the tension of youth and age, which turns into the tension of life and death when its deeper implications are revealed. We see it written largely in the phenomena of the social world, but we know it more intimately as a drama enacted within the soul.

"But why," it will be asked, "should a wise man be troubled with all this? Let him turn his back on death; let him dismiss it from his thoughts, and then, with life left in sole possession of the field, let him attend to the business of life so long as he is there to attend to it."

This is precisely the conclusion to which we shall ultimately arrive. But we shall arrive at

it by thinking about Death with the utmost intensity of which we are capable, and not by refusing to think of it at all.

"There is nothing of which the free man thinks less," says Spinoza, "than of death; and his wisdom is a meditation not of death but of life." A profound saying but often quoted for a shallow purpose by writers who give no reason for their admiration of it; sometimes as a means of summarily dismissing a subject which threatens the whole structure of their thought (especially if it takes the form of "the philosophy of happiness") and sometimes "as a tune whistled to keep up their courage when passing the cemetery." Before quoting it, as decisive of the matter before us, let this interesting question be asked—*how did Spinoza find it out?* —a question, we may add, which should always be asked of the philosopher, no matter what proposition he is advancing about life and death.

We cannot refrain from suspecting that Spinoza found it out by a frank disregard of the rule he here lays down, that is to say, by profound and intense meditation on the very subject which he bids us avoid. So great a

thinker would hardly adopt such a precept on hearsay, after the manner of so many who quote it in these days. He would *verify* it, not venturing to say that death is little to be thought of until by much thinking he had himself discovered its insignificance. Otherwise the saying has no weight. As lightly uttered by one who himself had never put it to the test of experience, no "free man," no wise man would accept it for guidance in a matter so momentous.

The statement as it stands is ambiguous, for the word "less" may be taken in two senses, if not in more. Does it mean less *frequently*, or less *intensely*? Taken in either sense it would appear that the practice of wise men in this particular coincides with the practice of fools, for, certainly, there is nothing of which fools think less frequently or less intensely than of death, while the animals think of it not at all. But in neither sense will the statement bear examination if taken as describing a wise man's habit of mind.

Obviously there are a thousand things of which wise men think less frequently than of death, and, *per contra*, there are few things of

which some of the wisest, such as Plato, Dante, Shelley and Carlyle, have thought more. The *Phaedo* is not the work of an infrequent thinker on death, of a mind which turned its thoughts in that direction only in parenthetical moments; nor the *Divine Comedy*; nor *Adonais*; nor *Sartor*. "Death," writes Carlyle in 1832, "has long been hourly present with me; I have long learned to look upon it as properly the beginning of life; its dark curtain grows more and more transparent; the departed, I think, are only hidden—they are still here." And again, nearly forty years later, "My outlook is all continually to the great change now inevitably near." "Singular how the death of one¹ has smitten all the universe dead to me."

And how stands the matter on the score of *intensity*? Does the mind of the wise man fall into a lethargy, and become vacant, whenever death is in question, until, at last, having drawn a blank every time, he learns to dismiss the empty topic as one that offers him nothing to think about? Surely not. However extensively the wise man may spread his thought over regions where death is not in the picture,

¹ His wife.

however true it may be that his thinking as measured by the clock turns directly on "nothing less than death," is it not also true that his mind turns on nothing quite so intensely as on *that*; so that, though the moments be few in which he thinks about death, they are none the less, but all the more, the moments of greatest depth and penetration, the moments when thought becomes *decisive*, the moments that determine the direction of his thinking, and the quality of it, concerning everything else in the wide universe? If that be so Spinoza's saying must be amended: "there is nothing on which a free man spends less thought, but nothing on which he spends a little thought to better purpose, than on death."

In that form the Christian religion may approve the saying. For though Christianity does not invite us to be always thinking about death, and gives a wide scope for our "social programmes" and other useful accessories, it yet stands true that the *intenser thought* of that religion is not given to such matters, but to something of far deeper significance from its own point of view—to the fact namely that a certain Personage *died*. About that point the

minds that created the New Testament come to a focus, the light that fell on other points being diffusions from the light that was kindled *there*; the end of their story, but the beginning of the significance that was in the story; the point of highest tension where "was dead" and "is alive" stretched the "dark curtain" so thin between them that it became transparent and thought passed through to the reality beyond. This was the "intense moment" of the Christian religion. By reproducing it in his own experience, but not otherwise, the wise man wins the right to go about his business "thinking of nothing less than death." He has settled accounts with that "enemy" and need think of him no more. But his state is widely different from that of the fool who has never thought of him at all. And the nature of his business will differ correspondingly.

Putting one's head in the sand to escape from a truth one would rather not face is questionable wisdom even in an ostrich. But the ostrich is happily unaware of its questionableness. For him, being what he is, the pursuit actually ceases at the moment when the sand blots it

from his vision; the device is a triumphant success, puts the poor bird completely at his ease for the time being and works admirably in all respects until such time as the hunter's noose falls round him. Under certain circumstances it might even be the best thing the ostrich could do. Assuming that he is certain to be caught anyhow, we can only praise him for obtaining what peace of mind he can in the meantime. But the nature of man is more complex; he knows what he is doing and why; and that knowledge, instead of blotting out the pursuit, only accentuates his consciousness that the pursuer is after him and that he is making a fool of himself into the bargain.

Our consolations fail to console us, and only raise our trouble to a higher state of irritation, when consciously applied for the purpose of getting ourselves consoled. We become like the victim of insomnia who keeps himself awake by consciously trying to send himself to sleep. So with our head-in-the-sand philosophies; such, for example, as that of Omar Khayyam, which would work very well were it not for the insistent reminder of consciousness that it is all a trick we are practising on ourselves. We

may drink ourselves blind to the significance of facts, taking

“Another and another cup to drown
The memory of this Impertinence,”

but we know what we are after and in that knowledge the charm fails to work. There is no difficulty in putting our heads into the sand, nor finding sand for the purpose. The difficulty is *to forget why we put them there.*

We need to consider these things whenever the advice is tendered us to think of nothing less than of death. Of all the forms of advice (which are many) none is more obviously self-defeating than that which bids us *not* to think of facts which Nature is constantly bringing to our remembrance. Death is the chief of them. Our efforts to dismiss it from thought endow it with a noxious vitality, which preys upon the mind instead of feeding it, and weakens the will at the point where strength is most urgently needed.

We have read somewhere a story about a noble-minded woman, sorely tempted in the region of the passions, who sought the advice of her confessor for means of escape from that

predicament. He advised her to "dismiss her lover from her thoughts," prescribing the appropriate exercises, and assuring her of their sovereign efficacy. She then retired to her chamber and there spent many hours in an agonizing effort to "dismiss" the intrusive image, imploring the assistance of heaven and all the saints. But the more she repelled the intruder the more importunate it became, until at last the effort to escape from tension itself became a tension too great to be endured; her will broke down under it and the uncontrollable impulse had its way.

Perhaps Spinoza's saying was not intended as advice. If it were, the "free man" will be recognized by his refusal to follow it. Knowing that the end of the world is at hand for every one of us in his turn, neither philosophy nor poetry will seduce him into shutting his eyes before a fact so momentous. In all artificial methods of forgetting it, from a sophistry to the wine-cup, he will discern a shallow trick, whose effect can only be, in those who are shallow enough to practise it, the revival in malignant and intolerable forms of the very memories they are intended to stifle. His "love

and service of others”—never long absent from the occupations of a wise man—will be conditioned, and in great part motived, by his clear perception that in a few years the longest-lived of these “others” will be no more, and his heart will be moved with a divine compassion every time he thinks of it. Like the great Exemplar in those industries, he will never forget, nor try to forget, that for every one of these “lost sheep,” as for the Scribes and Pharisees who neglect them and for Himself, *the end of the world is “at hand.”* His “social programme,” like that of the Exemplar aforesaid, will be drawn up in the grand perspective of that outstanding fact, and saved thereby from becoming a fool’s enterprise. His head will often be in the clouds; but he would rather have it there than in the sand.

VI: The Tension That Generates Energy

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THE view of our conscious life as a spiritual tension which increases with the clarification of insight and reaches its highest intensity when the will to live is consciously confronted with the inevitableness of death, so that we see the values of life in the same flash that reveals their frustration, and are left in a strait betwixt the two—this view demands exploration in many directions which, here, must be left unexplored, and is susceptible of many applications beyond the one we propose to attempt. But that application is now in sight.

All religions have their origin in the tensions of life and are sustained by the energies which these generate, now taking the form of moral conflicts conducted to a victorious issue, now of hopes and faiths energetically asserted and energetically retained against the pressure of their contraries. Between the higher religions and the lower the chief difference lies in the

wider comprehension by the former of the forces in conflict and the deeper penetration into their source, which is in God. In like manner all controversies between this form of religion and that resolve themselves ultimately into the question *which has the firmer foothold*, which will bear the greater strain in resisting the forces that oppose the self-affirmations of the spirit.

The same holds true of philosophy. Viewed in a broad perspective the history of philosophy is the history of a life-and-death opposition. It reveals the human spirit engaged in a perpetual struggle for existence, which grows *tenser* as the range of thought increases—was it ever so tense as now? A thousand influences, intellectual and social, have contributed to make the various systems what they are; these differ endlessly among themselves, but no one of them ever loses its essential character as an answer to the challenge of death. The answer may consist of calculated contempt, of studied indifference, of stoic resignation, of resolute agnosticism, of Promethean defiance, of the “wine-cup,” of the head buried in the sand; it may be read in the *Phaedo*, the *Civitas Dei*, the

Meditations of Marcus Aurelius, the *Divine Comedy*, *Hamlet*, *Faust*, *Adonais*, *Sartor, Omar Khayyam*; or in the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians. It may be an everlasting “yea” or an everlasting “no”; but, whether the one or the other, it answers the challenge of *death*, and puts the spirit of man on its mettle to maintain the everlastingness of the answer affirmed against the everlastingness of the answer refused. The mere form of the answer, apart from the willed energy, which can thus hold it against the opposite, is nothing—or nothing but cant.

If this dynamic conception of religion and of philosophy be accepted, what follows? This surely in the first place: we must definitely abandon the hope that any conceivable theory of the universe, any doctrine of God or of man, will ever release us from the necessity of self-affirmation against the opposite. The progress of thought does not advance towards a point of universal repose where the mind can sit down under its vine and fig-tree, none daring to make it afraid. The very solution of the problem, whether in terms of God, Christ, Immortality, or of whatsoever else, is a demand for contin-

ual self-affirmation *through the solution we have won.* Save as vehicles for the action of the will, our Q.E.D.'s have no meaning, are worthless, and we are better without them. They are either the forms of our self-affirmation or mere forms of words—that is, as near nothing as we can get. And the deeper we go into the mysteries of our existence, and the more significant our explanations of them become, the greater becomes the strain of expressing our discoveries through the corresponding self-affirmations.

Nor is this a thing in any wise to be deplored. For though the terms we use, such as "strain" and "tension," have acquired an unpleasant sound as suggesting conditions that most of us are in the habit of shunning, the reality they indicate is nothing other than the very fulness of our life. As hunters after the desirable state of feeling called "happiness" the terms of course appal us. But when we have discovered, as we are bound sooner or later to do, that the pursuit of "happiness" in that sense, whether one's own or other men's, is an unfailing source of misery, and never more obviously so than when we regulate it "scientifically," it may then

occur to us that we have made a mistake about human nature, that we have misjudged ourselves. Whether the truth be “pleasant” or no, true most assuredly it is that for happiness of that kind we are *not* made. Infinitely miserable would be our state if we got it—like that of the man in the story who was carried after death to the happiness-heaven he had always desired and found after a little experience of its amenities that he was being punished in the lowest pit of hell.

We are made for *creative work*—for the pain of achieving no less than for the joy of achievement. “The good” is a creative principle, as Plato taught; and he alone carries an invulnerable title to the adjective who has stamped the substantive into the business of his life, be that what it may. “Good *workman*” is the name of him; or we may call him a son of God, meaning the same. This man has found his vocation as a fellow-labourer with the Divine Excellence, which, at a height of tension infinitely beyond the highest we can experience or conceive, affirms itself through the length and breadth of creation and is Eternal Life in those who identify themselves with it; the only joys

he expects (and they are enough) being such as flow unsought from a willing participation in the creative enterprise and a willing acceptance of the pains, griefs and frustrations inevitably involved for all concerned in it, whether man, angel or god.

Until this notion of our nature has displaced the other and made us ashamed of it I cannot see that any good purpose would be served by attempting to advance better proofs of God and Immortality than those already in existence. We attach too much importance to improvements of theological doctrine, not perceiving that such improvements effect nothing when they fall into an age or a state of society afflicted with spiritual lethargy. We have sought after God and Immortality as *comforts* without which our "happiness" will not be complete, whereas in reality they are *incentives* and *challenges*—a truth dimly seen and imperfectly expressed by those who identify the voice of God with the categorical imperatives of the conscience and make heaven into the reward of obeying them. The concepts of God and Immortality are, strictly speaking, insignificant, mere empty forms save in so far as we fill them

with the vigour of our self-affirmation, in thought, in love and in work. Sought as means to the enhancement of our “happiness” they are not to be found, not even as mere forms of thought.

They err, too, who think (and how many have thought this!) that the Kingdom of God, if that be the name of their Utopia, is a self-maintaining and inexpensive institution, so that once established it will stand for ever, or that God Himself will take over the maintenance of it, while the rest of us stand discharged from further responsibilities in that matter and left at leisure for some kind of universal picnic or everlasting bank holiday. “His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom,” but on this condition—that the willed energy of its members is equal to the task of maintaining its everlastingness. Established to-day it would vanish to-morrow were that condition absent. Of all kingdoms the Kingdom of God is the most highly *taxed*—and the tax falls on the wills of its members. It differs from the kingdom of the devil precisely in this—that the *maintenance* of it from day to day gives full-time employment to the whole body of the citizens; while the devil’s will

stand on "four hours work a day or even less," the rest being given to "happiness." All "improvements of the social system" reduce themselves in the last analysis to new demands for social energy, and for energy exercised on a higher level of wisdom, skill, fortitude and self-devotion by every one of the units participating in the improvement. This has been overlooked, to the grievous detriment of Utopian enterprise in general and not least to the religious variety of it. Behind the problem of finding our way to Utopia (whether it lie in this world or in any other), which is all that our Utopians seem to be concerned with, lies the deeper problem of *earning our right to stay there after we have arrived.* Failing a solution of that, which can only be given in terms of hard work and better workmanship, there is good reason to think that Utopia will break down as soon as it is established—will turn out, in fact, to be another of those "disappointments" of which the age of progress has already encountered so many, all due to the same cause.

VII: Soul-saving and Bread-winning

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OUR last effort shall be to find a point of contact between the thought we have reached and the familiar realties of our daily life. Perhaps the task will not prove as difficult as it seems at first sight.

To an industrial civilization such as ours, the most familiar of all realities is the daily work which sustains it in being, and by which it is, or can be, sustained. By industry the living of industrial civilization is earned, and bread won; by industry the soul of it is saved, and not otherwise. This is the substance of its life, the stuff of its existence. Through it must operate the spiritual forces which determine the destiny of that civilization, their nature as divine or diabolic being accurately reflected in the quality of the goods delivered. The living is earned by the quantity of the work done, the soul saved by the quality put into the work. When civili-

zation tries to earn its living by one set of operations, such as mass production, and to save its soul by another set of operations, such as church-going, the result is inadequate living and a soul not saved. The two operations must become one if either is to attain its object. Short of that, civilization will be as a house divided against itself, the energy that is needed for the united operation of soul-saving and bread-winning being used up in a wasteful conflict between the two. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven—give us this day our daily bread." A significant juxtaposition!

The same holds true if we draw the division between work and leisure. The work and the leisure of our industrial civilization must pull together, or pull each other down. In opposition they create a tension which society cannot bear. When the leisure of industrial civilization lives *on* its labour—as it now mostly does—instead of living *in* it, the leisure then becomes parasitic, sucks the sap out of the tree and kills it. The only leisure which industrial civilization can tolerate for long is that which consists in a higher kind of industry—such as Art, which is work raised to its highest value

by becoming beautiful. The two must join forces.

Strictly speaking nothing can ever *matter* quite so greatly to an industrial civilization as the character of its work, the value of all tendencies being strictly measurable by their tendency to promote *that*. All hinges at this point. We might say, indeed, that the characters of the men and women who do the work matter more. But we shall only be saying the same thing in a misleading way. For men and women (as we conceive them) are essentially identified with the work they do. This it is which, when all other influences have been allowed for, makes them what they are. To say that man makes his work means nothing till we see that his work also makes him. Neither his religion nor his philosophy can influence him greatly till he is actually engaged in clothing them with the form of his work. Does he wish to improve *himself*? Let him improve his *work*, and one morning he shall wake up to find himself a better *man*. There is no other way. And so for the civilization to which he belongs.

Within this work lies a means, the likeliest this age affords, for developing, both in society

and in the separate individuals of it, a Spiritual Energy sufficient for the answering of all Challenges, for the bearing of all Tensions, even that of life-and-death. On that development we base our hopes for a revival of religion, believing that all attempts to revive it otherwise will be defeated by the spiritual lethargy of those to whom it is offered.

At first sight the work of the world, as now carried on, is an unpromising point of departure for an enterprise so portentous. We have lived in great cities and know something of human toil and of the conditions which surround it in those mansions of unrest. But, unpromising as it is, we believe it susceptible of transfiguration—of transfigurations both as to the motives that inspire it and the results to which it leads. And we see heroic forces already engaged in the effort to transfigure it—of which the chief are Education and the Spirit of Youth. We do not despair.

Our answer, in short, like that of Kant in a somewhat similar predicament, will lean more to the practical than to the theoretical side. It will be an appeal for self-affirmation in the creation of value. So far as there is any theory

in it, and there is some, the proposition will be that man's nature calls him to be a partner in the Divine Excellence whose ceaseless activity sustains the universe. To do the work that has fallen to him in the best possible manner it admits of is the vocation of man as we here conceive it. Fulfilling that vocation he inherits Eternal Life. In self-affirmation along this line the good workman (or son of God) finds "the whole strength of the universe" behind him, with him, in him. He and it have become working partners, his weakness made perfect in its strength. Nothing, he now says, can separate him from the love of God—the Divine Excellence which upholds the world. As a good workman he has no desire to become immortal in any other way. But he is sure of his immortality in this. The Divine Excellence cannot die.

With the argumentative possibilities of all this we are not greatly concerned. As a theme for exploitation in argument it may be, for anything we know, less than the least of all the theories. We are concerned with it as an experience to which the good workman can unquestionably attain, and which, if attained by

many, would transform the face of a working civilization—to a nobler face than it now wears. The value of it, for us, lies not in the quantity of eloquence that can be got out of it, which is not much, but in the quality of performance that can be put into it, which is infinite. To no other form of religious experience do we attach so much importance as to this of the good workman. To many, that have been strongly recommended, we attach none at all, having found on trial that they are not susceptible of reproduction—not, at least, by us.

It is largely because our age has fallen into the evil habit of choosing its ideals more for the amount of eloquence that can be got out of them than for the quality of the performance (mostly silent) that can be put into them that the work of the world has fallen to its present low level of drudgery, monotony and mechanical slave-labour, becoming a burden instead of an education, a curse instead of a blessing to three-fifths of our “massed populations” and a source of quarrel instead of a bond of friendship between the nations. The earliest religious experiences of man grew spontaneously out of his work and out of the intimacies with nature

which this involved; his social groupings, with their attendant moralities, grew, with a like spontaneity, from the felt necessity of getting the work done in the best manner there and then seen to be possible; and to the end of time religion and morality will grow out of nothing else. Art, too, which reflects the consciousness of man as a co-worker with the Divine Excellence and is simply common work done uncommonly *well*, arose in the same manner—the good workman awoke one morning and found himself an artist. As substitutes for all this the religion of eloquence and argument effects nothing—unless it be something to create a false scent. There is, indeed, one kind of religious eloquence that *tells*. It is the song which the good workman sings when he becomes conscious of the divine significance of his work. All “good sermons,” whether preached on the Mount or in the pulpit, contain at least an echo of that song. “Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect” is the refrain of it.

VIII: How a Good Workman Explains His Religion

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THE good workman's religion stands sharply distinguished from most of the religions around it by this peculiarity—that the more intimately he becomes acquainted with the Object of it, and the more assured that this is real, the more difficult he finds it to define what, precisely, that Object is and the more unwilling to embark on that kind of definition. As his religious experience grows more dominating and masterful or, as one might say, more *real*, his theological competence, as judged by examination standards, declines; or he becomes so purely negative and destructive in that department that even the most liberal-minded examiner would probably refuse to pass him.

We have read somewhere of a great surgeon, a specialist of world-wide renown, who was commonly believed, not without reason, to be

an atheist. But he greatly resented the imputation and once said, when the theologians had driven him into a corner, "If you want to know what my religion is *come and see me operate*." This, we imagine, is what the good workman will always say when you challenge him to define his religion and get him with his back to the wall; though even this, of course, he will only say under great pressure as the alternative to saying nothing, which, as a rule, he greatly prefers. "Come and see me operate in the field, the workshop, the factory, the office, the bank, the studio, the hospital; in the sinking ship, the typhus camp, 'the immanent deadly breach'; in Downing Street, Gethsemane, Golgotha"—or wherever else the good workman may happen to carry on his business. "The works that I do, these are they that testify of me." Go and see him *operate*. So with industrial civilization. Would you find out what London, Paris, New York really believes in, what its religion is? Go and see it "operating."

But though the religion of the good workman is far too intense to permit of his becoming a successful theologian, there are times when the very intensity of it forces him to find

relief in a little theology, if only by way of talking to himself. In those moments you may hear him discussing, or perhaps soliloquizing, about the True, the Good, the Beautiful; parcelling out the Divine Excellence in that manner. Yet who knows so well as the good workman that the Divine Excellence cannot be parcelled out at all? Does God parcel himself out in these values? Does he take stock of himself under these divisions? Does he, too, talk to himself? Does he talk to himself about himself, contemplating his own nature, as they say, analyzing it, classifying the parts of it under appropriate "concepts" and admiring "the harmony which results from their synthesis"? Does he soliloquize in language—English, German, Greek, Hebrew—saying to himself, "What I *think* is the Truth; what I *do* is the Good; what I *enjoy* is the Beautiful"? Is God, in short, a philosopher whose philosophy consists in understanding himself? The good workman thinks *not!* He has observed, in the finite sphere where he operates, that "contemplating his own nature," whether by way of admiration or otherwise, does not help him to get on with his job, still less to give it that finishing touch of perfection

by giving which he becomes like to his “Father in heaven.” He remembers, for example, how once when he was playing great music to an admiring audience, or letting great music *play him*—that seemed more the way of it to him at the time—he suddenly became aware of himself as an object of admiration, saw the whole scene, as in a mirror, with himself as a godlike personage at the centre of it, *and instantly broke down*—“stage fright,” they called it. From such-like experiences the good workman—who is a kind of reasoner too—draws inferences. If self-contemplation, he asks, is fatal to the playing of a violin, how stands the matter when the instrument played is the universe and the player—God? Does God play that music or does that music play him? If the former, does God contemplate himself as the player? Again the good workman thinks *not*. He thinks—and this is why the theologians will have nothing to do with him—that the Divine Excellence is sublimely unaware of itself in that character. Perhaps God does not know that he is God—not resembling the great ones of the earth in that particular, and being infinitely greater than they for that very reason. His greatness is not

an attribute of his operation, nor the operation reflected in a mirror, but the *operation itself*. “The divine intellect is the perfect music which the world makes, the perfect music which it hears.”¹ In like manner the good workman (or son of God) *makes* the music that he *hears*; makes it in his work and hears it in his religion; and that music is—*himself*. He plays the music and the music plays *him*. “The true, the good, the beautiful,” is the name we give to the melody played; and great is the quantity of eloquence and argument we have got out of those three words. But the melody of the eloquence is one and the melody of the original performance is another. This no man can hear until he *makes* it for himself. God, who plays it eternally throughout creation, hears it in that manner. Whether he has ever given it a name may be doubted.

Such is the peculiarity of the good workman’s religion, the bad workman’s want of religion displaying itself by opposite signs. We get the first hint of it by watching the good workman “operate.” But we are not initiated until we begin “operating” ourselves. We find

¹ George Santayana, *Dialogues in Limbo*, p. 189.

God in like manner—by watching him “operate” in the universe, and by “reproducing” the “operation” in the minute fragment of it where our part is played, thereby endowing the fragment with the Divine Excellence of the whole. There results an immense simplification of propaganda, accompanied by a corresponding profundity. Two propositions now comprise the whole propaganda of the good workman: “My father worketh hitherto and I work,” for theology; “Go and do thou likewise,” for morals.

We are constantly told that, if industrial civilization is ever to emerge from the evil conditions that now deface it, religion must be the operating cause. To this no thoughtful man will refuse his assent. But the question remains as to the kind of religion which industrial civilization can assimilate and by which it can gradually be reformed. Not by one, we may be sure, which has been *fabricated* for the express purpose of reforming it. Religion is precisely that which cannot be fabricated. It cannot be argued into existence—nor argued out of existence either, when once it has taken

root. Those who say "Go to now, let us make up a religion adapted to the needs of the time, in harmony with modern thought, accommodated to democratic aspirations and with an attractive 'social programme' in the foreground of it"—these people are attempting a fabrication, which religion can never be. And it is only doing the same thing in another way when the effort is made to revive some old religion, or form of religion, once effectual but whose working days are over. The drawback, the fatal drawback, to all such undertakings is that people know very well what they are after. The fabricators know that they are fabricating, and the world knows that what is being offered to it is a fabrication. For this reason fabricated "modernism" and fabricated "fundamentalism" are bound in the long run to come to nothing. Religion is a thing of spontaneous growth. It arises naturally or not at all.

It may be laid down as a self-evident proposition that so long as civilization retains the industrial character its religion, if it have any, will be rooted in *industrial experience*. Its religious experience—and without religious experience no religion can be—will be its indus-

trial experience raised to a high pitch of intensity and power.

If industrial experience were merely an affair of working machines and turning over money the outlook for religion would be hopeless, or nearly so. But industrial experience includes much more than that. It includes the whole system of human relationships on which industry reposes—a system capable of development into the world-wide co-operation of mankind. It includes the possibilities of perfection in every article produced and in every service rendered. It includes unlimited opportunities for the transformation of wisdom into skill, for the creation of real values, and for the practice of all the heroisms and loyalties that attend that process. Once let industrial civilization turn its face in the direction of *excellence* and there will be a school for human character established on the earth such as the earth has never seen before. From that moment industrial experience will be on the way to a new “variety” of religious experience—new in respect of its form but old as the universe in respect of its essence. And the essence of it is what we have endeavoured to set forth—the religion of the good

workman, old as the universe, which means eternally young, because it is the religion of God himself.

How far is this thing possible? Impossible, we answer, without a world-wide mobilization of the forces interested in effecting it. Impossible without a League of Nations which shall be, in principle, a League of Workers, or world-wide co-operative society for the well-doing of everything that needs to be done. Impossible without continuous educational effort. Impossible without a general uprising of youth, determined to bring it about. Impossible without all this and much more of the same kind. Possible, therefore, only so far as heroic spirits are forthcoming who find in the challenge of the impossible the very conditions they are sent into the world to cope withal. "A pessimist," it has been wisely said, "finds a difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist finds an opportunity in every difficulty."

When Christianity first appeared in the world its prospects of triumph were nil. But the conditions of the time were favourable to an outbreak of spiritual ardour and Christianity was the spark that kindled the conflagration.

That wonderful event can never be repeated in the form it then assumed, for the conditions which rendered it possible no longer exist. But mankind remains as susceptible now as it was then of developing a spiritual energy which can change the face of the world. Let the young see to it! 'Let the Youth Movement mark it well!

IX: Church Steeples and Smoking Chimneys

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As the traveller by train passes through an industrial district in Great Britain or America, say the region round Manchester, Glasgow or Pittsburgh, attentively noting the significant aspects of the scene that spreads out before the eye, perhaps the first fact to strike him will be that the church steeples are outnumbered and dominated by the smoking chimneys. As features in the picture the chimneys, together with the element that comes out of their tops, have unquestionably the best of it, while the steeples, out of which, naturally, nothing comes, are reduced to relative insignificance and have an air of being merely tolerated. A church steeple in the midst of rural peace and loveliness looks happy enough, as becomes a monarch of all it surveys; but a church steeple in the midst of smoking chimneys looks "the picture of misery," as though it were ineffectually protesting

against the universe. Our traveller, if given to sentiment, will feel sorry for the steeple; if æsthetically inclined, he will wish it away, as a disturbance and discord in a scene to which it does not properly belong.

And if, in the comfort of his train, he happens to have been reading a book on "the History of the Christian Church," and his eye has just encountered the statement (not uncommon in such books) that "Christianity has transformed the face of Western Civilization," the statement will certainly strike him, there and then, as a very odd one. "The face of Western Civilization," as he sees it from the carriage window, and considered as a visible object in space, is a *dirty* face; nor has the dirt, which pours down from the smoking chimneys, left even the church steeples undefiled; for they, too, are black along with everything else, so that not a feature can be discerned on that face but needs washing. Arguing from these visible data our traveller, with a glance perhaps to the smoke canopy overhead, would almost certainly draw the conclusion that "business," in these regions, had eclipsed religion. And he would not be far wrong. At all events we must admit

that, as things now are, the smoking chimneys have the ascendancy over the church steeples.

Is this state of things to go on? Will "the face of Western Civilization" grow dirtier and dirtier? Will the eclipse of religion by business become total? Will the church steeples grow more and more insignificant, until finally the smoking chimneys, nationalized by that time (together with their smoke), have it all their own way while communist Sunday schools are roaring full blast where the churches once raised their ineffectual protest? Or the other way about? Will the steeples (with "full congregations" beneath them) outnumber the chimneys, as they are now outnumbered, and recover their lost ascendancy, so that the traveller of the future passing through the country named Black will find it a green and smiling land, a church steeple on every eminence, and only an inconspicuous chimney here and there, with a thin wreath of ascending smoke, to remind him that "four hours work a day, or even less," are still going on.

For my own part I can see no reason for anticipating the fulfilment of either of these dreams, but many reasons for anticipating the

contrary for both of them. Long before the total eclipse of religion by business could be effected, the whole enterprise known as Western Civilization would have gone to everlasting smash; even now the smoking chimneys are not so independent of the church steeples as they seem, and would topple down if these were withdrawn. As to the other dream I cannot see that "four hours work a day or even less" would have the least tendency to revive interest in church steeples or to promote the building of them or to increase the congregations that gather beneath; nor can I think of any "Denomination," no matter how up-to-date, that would find its revenues increased or its fortunes otherwise improved by such an arrangement. I should anticipate rather that the amount of "leisure" thereby conferred on the community would prove more immediately fatal to the church steeples than to the smoking chimneys, a good many of which would have to be kept smoking anyhow to furnish these happy people with golf-sticks, beer, champagne, cigarettes, chewing gum, kodak cameras, ham sandwiches, picnic outfits, light literature, motor cars, picture shows, sewage systems and a

thousand such-like amenities, until the time arrived, as it assuredly would, when the chief occupation of their "leisure" became that of cutting one another's throats. And even that could not be carried out on a large-scale and scientific manner unless the chimneys continued to smoke.

But fortunately the possibilities of the future are not limited to this grim pair of alternatives. There are others. It may be—I give it as the barest possibility—that the chimneys of the future will have some of the characteristics which now belong exclusively—too exclusively—to steeples. To begin with, they may cease to emit any smoke, having learnt to consume it by improved methods of combustion, so that, just as nothing now comes out of the church steeples, so nothing (but hot air) will then come out of the chimneys—one of the first signs that Christianity has really begun "to transform the face of Western Civilization." In the next place the general architecture down below—the architects having by this time realized their true function as Christian missionaries—will vastly improve itself—and this, naturally, will lead upward to a gradual improvement of the

chimneys, and to placing them in positions where they please the eye instead of offending it, the “town planners” of the future giving more and more attention to that particular, and not failing to institute summary proceedings against any architect, captain of industry or proletariat of workers who builds an ugly chimney or puts one where no chimney ought to be.

All this will come about—or, let us say, *may* come about—as the result of a general revival of the spirit of good workmanship. This will probably show itself first in the revival of architecture; by which particular revival, I venture to think, the Kingdom of God would be more effectually promoted in these days than by any of the attempts that are now being made to produce “a creed in harmony with modern thought.” In this way the chimneys of the future, though not necessarily exhibiting the Gothic, Classic, or any other style now recognized by ecclesiastical architects, may become just as satisfactory to the moral and æsthetical senses as any steeple could conceivably be.

But these architectural phenomena will be but the outward and visible manifestations of a

more important change going on simultaneously in the work beneath the chimneys, in proportion as the spirit of good workmanship gets hold of it. *This will acquire more and more the character of worship*; while the groups of workers will become (without their knowing it) Christian congregations—that is, associations of men and women, trained to discipline and obedience, and united in a co-operative and brotherly spirit for turning their wisdom into skill (in preference to rhetoric) and for getting the work of the world done in the best way that intelligence can contrive. Then the cry will be not for “four hours work a day or even less” but for eight hours work a day or even more; for this is the Church where the congregation “ne’er breaks up” and “sabbaths never cease”—“work” and “leisure” being variant phases of one and the same occupation, that, namely, of converting time into eternity—the common function of church steeple and smoking chimney.

“Well,” said Socrates, “perhaps in heaven there is laid up the pattern of such a city for him who wishes to behold it, and, beholding, to organize himself accordingly. And the ques-

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tion of its present or future existence on earth is quite unimportant. For in any case he will adopt the practices of that city to the exclusion of those of every other."

"Probably he will," answered Glaucon.¹

¹ Plato, *Republic*, Book IX.

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